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# Systematic Humanitarian Blackmail via Aquarius?

## Confronting Europe with a Humanitarian Trojan Horse

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## Challenge of the "headless hearts" to the "heartless heads"?

The economist Paul Collier has argued that: *the debate on migration is polarised into two strident positions, a heartless and the headless* (*On Immigration*, *Head to Head: Al Jazeera*, 7 August 2015; rerun on *Head to Head*, 18 August 2018). Subsequently he clarifies:

> To rise to the challenge, we need to combine the instinctive compassion that mass suffering arouses with the dispassionate analysis necessary to craft an effective response. We need the heart supported by the head. The growing humanitarian crisis has come about because we've deployed one without the other. Our response has veered between the heartless head and the headless heart, and the results have been calamitous. (*Why camps are the wrong way to help today's refugees*, *The Spectator*, March 2017)

In an extensive review of the book which Collier co-authored *(Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*, 2017), the metaphor is further emphasized (David Jimenez, *How Europe's 'Headless Hearts' Made Refugee Crisis Worse*, *The American Conservative*, 27 September 2017). The current role of the migrant rescue vessel Aquarius in the European policy debate on refugees is an exemplification of this.

**Significance of a name?** In heroic response to the influx of refugees into Europe from across the Mediterranean, through its name Aquarius effectively frames humanitarian intervention in terms of a popular 12-fold pattern -- whether inadvertently or deliberately. This is curiously reinforced by media coverage of the retrieval of refugees from what are generically named as Zodiacs. The life-saving operation occurs within a highly controversial public relations framework in which imagery is vigorously exploited by all parties, as may itself be controversially examined (*Starvation Imagery as Humanitarian Trump Card? Counterproductive emotional blackmail engendering worldwide indifference*, 2016).

This invites reflection on the remarkable unexplored preference for strategic formulation in terms of a 12-fold set (*Checklist of 12-fold Principles, Plans, Symbols and Concepts: web resources*, 2011). Examples from there include:

- 12-Point Checklist for Disaster Recovery Planning
- 12-Point WHO Strategic Action Plan for Pandemic Influenza (2006-2007)
- 12-Point Action Plan (World Economic Forum, 1998)
- 12-Point Plan to Combat Terrorism
- 12-Point EU Action Plan to support the Millennium Development Goals (2010)
- 12 Leverage Points to Intervene in a System (Academy for Systems Change, 1997)

Subservience to this pattern could be considered to date from the sets of 12 deities of ancient Greece and Rome -- now variously echoed in the iconography of the agencies of the United Nations and otherwise.

**Framing the one-dimensional focus of Aquarius within a 12-dimensional system?** Under the symbolic banner of the astrological

sign Aquarius, there is therefore a case for reframing commentary on the life-saving initiative within a potentially richer 12-fold framework -- as its use might unconsciously imply.

1. **Resentment**: Engendering increasing irritation and resentment in migrant receiving receiving societies, thereby:
    - undermining credibility and appreciation of valued humanitarian initiatives elsewhere
    - alienating support from humanitarian well-wishers
2. **Indifference**: Engendering increasing indifference to suffering elsewhere in societies pressured to receive and accommodate refugees
    - reinforcing aid fatigue, compassion fatigue, and donor fatigue
    - reinforcing psychic numbing in response to disaster imagery
3. **Opposition**: Engendering increasingly active antagonism and resistance in receiving communities -- whether "politically incorrect", irrational, or otherwise
    - encouraging overreaction and unreasonable response
    - reinforcing extremist far-right agendas, populist protest, and "political incorrectness"
    - increasing support for "building walls", whether tangible, bureaucratic, or otherwise
    - the greater the success, the greater the opposition, and the greater the risk of total rejection
    - privileging refugees relative to the disadvantaged in the receiving communities
4. **Violence**: Engendering increasing violence and fatalities in receiving communities
    - without consideration of the implications for those affected, or provision for the threats they experience
    - without consideration of increasing security issues (insulting behavior, break-ins, muggings, rape, knifings, etc)
5. **Deteriorating quality of life**: Ensuring further reduction in quality of life of receiving communities, already stretched for resources
    - without consultation or consent from the communities in question
    - without provision for effective mediating or remedial processes
    - ignoring cumulative effect in communities where quality of life has long been cultivated and valued
6. **False hopes**: Engendering false hopes in millions in disadvantaged countries
    - that the challenge of their lives can be resolved by migrating to a Europe faced with its own socio-economic problems
    - discouraging efforts to resolve issues in those countries, especially by encouraging risk-takers to emigrate
7. **Exploitation**: Cynical exploitation of suffering and disadvantage as a form of strategic "humanitarian shield" or Trojan Horse
    - subtle media manipulation to further particular political agendas -- without transparent consultation
    - imposition of a political agenda to share the advantages of others -- without their consent
8. **Irresponsibility**: Deniable culpability of those responsible for strategy
    - systemic irresponsibility and indifference to wider consequences
    - implication that it is others who are responsible for any systemic consequences -- or should be, whether or not their approval has been sought
9. **Short-termism**: Unquestionable increase in "knee-jerk" preoccupation with the short-term
    - "don't think, just act -- as we righteously prescribe"
    - obscuring wider and longer-term systemic considerations
    - reinforcing avoidance of wider issues in other arenas in preference to responsiveness to the news cycle
    - skillfully ignoring the many effectively condemned to death in the future by focusing narrowly on those who can be saved with full media coverage
10. **Obfuscation**: Complicity in obscuring wider systemic role of those engendering conflict, thereby ensuring a continuing flow of refugees
    - whether benefitting from manufacture and sale of arms to combatants
    - or active use of arms in conflict arenas as a strategic foreign policy
    - complicity in destabilizing Europe
11. **Complicity**: Exploiting duplicity of receiving governments
    - in need of replacement labour but unable to engender it otherwise
    - deriving economic and strategic benefits from the process which engenders refugees
    - massaging statistics -- reunion
12. **Arrogance**: Dangerously reframing and eroding the image of humanitarian agencies like Médecins Sans Frontières, SOS Méditeranée, and the like
    - increasing the impression of presumption and righteous arrogance, following the pattern of TINA, and *"You're either with us, or against us*"
    - implication of an ambition for a humanitarian equivalent to full-spectrum dominance of moral discourse
    - evoking suspicion as to whether whether "blackmailers" participate in accommodating refugees according to the degree required of receiving communities

Especially striking was the contrast made between video reporting of demands made of European governments in declarations -- following the "success" of the most recent operation of Aquarius -- compared with the wording of the formal press release. Unfortnately, the more relief agencies consider themselves to be unquestionably "right", the more others will frame the perception as "wrong". The wider systemic implications of a 12-fold pattern within which the singular Aquarian perspective may be embedded are considered below.

## Humanitarian intervention as a Trojan Horse for Europe?

**"Helen of Troy" and the "Trojan Horse"**? Evocation of an ancient symbol system through Aquarius, suggests the merit of exploring

another foundational myth of particular iconic significance for Europe, namely the Trojan Horse.

As noted by *Wikipedia*, the Trojan Horse is a tale from the Trojan War about the subterfuge used to enter the independent city of Troy and win the war. In the canonical version, after a fruitless 10-year siege, the besiegers constructed a huge wooden horse, and hid a select force of men inside. The besiegers pretended to sail away, and the Trojans pulled the horse into their city as a victory trophy. That night the select force crept out of the horse and opened the gates for the rest of the besieging army, which had sailed back under cover of night. The besiegers entered and destroyed the city of Troy, ending the war. Metaphorically a "Trojan Horse" has come to mean any trick or stratagem that causes a target to invite a foe into a securely protected bastion or place.

In the myth, the Trojan war was a consequence of the most beautiful woman -- Helen -- having been abducted to Troy. Is the highest value of Europe now to be considered as having been "abducted" in some manner -- from some more universal sphere? Europe as Troy?

Considerable controversy has already been evoked by use of that metaphor (Donald Trump, *Syrian Refugees 'Could Be The Great Trojan Horse'*, *YouTube*, 6 October 2015; *Hungary's Leader Calls Migration 'Trojan Horse' of Terrorism*, Associated Press, 7 March 2017; *Europe refugee policy is 'Trojan horse of terrorism'*, says Orban, *Financial Times*, 30 March 2017; *Refugees: the Trojan horse of terrorism? OpenDemocracy*, 5 June 2017; Brian C. Joondeph, *Is the Migrant Caravan a Trojan Horse? American Thinker*, 4 April 2018). The metaphor can be readily understood as framing a "heartless" perspective in contrast to any "headless" approach.

Use of the metaphor has evoked the considered reflection of Bulent Senay (*Deconstructing the Trojan horse: towards non-essentialist discourse*, *DOC Research Institute*, 22 January 2018):

> Cultural essentialism is a form of violence through which one constantly judges people without knowing anything about them. These views and stereotypes are often found to be untrue, and even dangerous. They develop in an environment of anxiety provoked by propaganda....
>
> In relation to discussion of the migration `crisis`, the Trojan horse is not only a metaphor but has also now become a discourse. It is an `essentialist` discourse. This essentialism benefits from Western 'human rights discourse' which has traditionally been used to carve out a moral high ground in missionary zeal towards 'the other'. Current 'human rights' ideology plays a structuring role in the Trojan horse discourse....
>
> A central deconstructive argument is that, in all the classic dualities of Western thought, one idea or meaning is privileged or 'central' over the other. The privileged, central term is the one most associated with hegemony and essence. What is perceived as central (in this case Western `human rights discourse`) has been classically conceived as original, authentic, and superior, while the other (non-Western, migrant) is thought of as secondary, derivative, or even 'parasitic'.
>
> In this context, Trojan horse discourse operates as a homogeneous, culturally essentialist view of the Muslim faith as potentially dangerous. This creates binary oppositions and 'violent hierarchies'.

Reservations aside, is it Angela Merkel who is now to be understood as the embodiment of the highest humanitarian value -- as duly recognized in her receipt of the highest Catholic award (*The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel received the 'Lamp of Peace'*, *Euronews*, 12 May 2018; *Merkel receives Franciscan 'Lamp of Peace' in Assisi, Italy*, *DW*, 12 May 2018)? This followed her receipt of the Charlemagne Prize in 2008.

**Humanitarian intervention as a Trojan Horse?** This issue has been variously explored more generally:

- Alex J. Bellamy: *Responsibility to Protect or Trojan Horse? The Crisis in Darfur and Humanitarian Intervention after Iraq* (*Ethics and International Affairs*, 19, 2005, 2)
- Jonathan Horowitz: *Laws of War: Humanitarian Stallion or Trojan Horse?* (*Just Security*, 3 November 2016)
- Taimoor Khan: *Is Humanitarian Aid The Perfect Trojan Horse For CIA?* (*ValueWalk*, 9 November 2015)
- Chris Dolan and Lucy Hovil: *Humanitarian Protection in Uganda: a Trojan Horse?* (*Humanitarian Policy Group*, December 2006)
- Emre Oktem and Alexandre Toumarkine: *Will the Trojan War take place? Violations of the rules of war and the Battle of the Dardanelles (1915)* (*International Committee of the Red Cross*, 21 November 2016)
- James Pattison: *Humanitarian Intervention and International Law: The Moral Importance of an Intervener's Legal Status* (*Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 10, 2007, 3)

**Aquarius as a "false flag" operation?** However, is it Merkel who has effectively been complicit in eliciting the current siege of Europe? Does this complicity extend to tacitly arranging for Aquarius to function "innocently" as a humanitarian Trojan Horse? There is of course unfortunate confirmation that until the time of writing Aquarius was sailing under a false flag (Gibraltar) -- rather than revealing its German origins (*Migrant rescue ship Aquarius to be stripped of Gibraltar registration*, *Sky News*, 13 August 2018; *Gibraltar ship stripped of flag amid dispute over migrants stranded at sea*, *CNN*, 14 August 2018). What else has it been endeavouring to conceal?

Should Aquarius be considered a German false flag operation consistent with the imposition on Europe by Merkel of controversial strategic policies regarding refugees? The focus on Aquarius recalls the role of the French government in stealthily arranging for the sabotage of the *Rainbox Warrior* in 1985 in New Zealand -- a vessel of Greenpeace seeking to obstruct secretive nuclear testing in the Pacific. As might be expected, responsibility for the sinking of the vessel was initially denied.

Framed otherwise, it could be asked what might now be concealed by an innocent-seeming cloak of "humanitarian stealth" -- whether inadvertently by some or deliberately by others? Questions are now evoked following exposure over past decades to "white-washing", "blue-washing" and "green-washing" -- each variously deprecated. Racially prejudiced though it may appear, is there now a case for recognizing a form of "brown-washing" by which any reference to the influx of migrants from other continents may be justified? The

term is already defined as the conspicuous over-representation of racial minorities in advertising -- disproportionate to the population. Similar use may be made of "yellow-washing". Give use of this laundry metaphor, is there any legitimate concern with whether the colours might "run"?

Curiously, given the implied "astrological" metaphor, the public relations initiative of Aquarius calls for critical assessment in terms of so-called "astroturfing". This is the process whereby organizations can hire fake advocates who create the illusion of real support for their message -- a process which can warp the public perception of anything (John Oliver, *Astroturfing*, *Last Week Tonight*, 12 August 2018)

Is the humanitarian intervention of Aquarius a covert enabling strategy consistent with the influx famously anticipated by Nostradamus (David Montaigne, *Nostradamus and the Islamic Invasion of Europe*, 2017)?

**Recognizing a humanitarian "cloaking device" -- a "humanitarian shield"?** As a pattern, there is a tantalizingly elusive similarity to several other strategic agendas whose proponents vigorously and defensively claim unquestionable humanitarian justification:

- ***Security initiatives***, specifically evoking fear of terrorism -- whether or not that fear may be evoked by "false flag" operations to convince any doubters. Much is made of the covert agenda in promoting a culture of fear in order to justify expenditure by the security and intelligence services, and by the military-industrial complex more generally (*Indians? Witches? Natives? Jews? Islamists? ETs?* 2017; *30 Questions for the Counter-terrorism Experts of the World*, 2017)
- ***Aerospace initiatives***, typically framed as the ultimate symbol of human creativity in progress towards the stars, with benefits to health research, ecology and communications. The media focus carefully sidelines any mention of the huge amount of space debris that has been accumulating in orbit as a result of launching satellites into orbit (more than 400 in 2017, over 4 times the yearly average for 2000-2010). It is estimated that there are some 20,000 human-made objects in orbit, from working satellites to small shards of solar panels and rocket pieces.(*The quest to conquer Earth's space junk problem*, *Nature*, 5 September 2018).
- ***Political correctness*** as this may be related to repression of dissenting opinion. This frames the expectation that everybody is expected to "like" everyone else, irrespective of preferences which may be otherwise expressed. Failure in this respect is then held to justify labels of the form fascist, sexist, or racist -- and any trial by media thereby enabled (*Elaborating a Declaration on Combating Anti-otherness*, 2018; *Global Civilization through Interweaving Polyamory and Polyanimosity?* 2018).
- ***Gender equality*** especially in contexts of social power and gender dominance -- irrespective of other dynamics in the complex relationship between genders and the manner in which it is variously exploited (*Golden Globes Confusing Cleavage, Hype and Hypocrisy*, 2018; *Cultivating the Myth of Human Equality*, 2016)
- ***Health provisions***, variously conflated with safety and security such as to justify otherwise questionable regulations and excessive expenditure which cannot be reasonably challenged -- a pattern indistinguishable from the marketing agendas for pharmaceutical products, food products, safety equipment, and the like. (*Fake news and distrust of science could lead to global epidemics*, *Wired*, 9 January 2018)

Is there indeed a subtle form of subterfuge to be recognized?

## Value, price and cost of lives to be saved

Curiously the symbolic realm is even more profoundly central to the life-saving operation of Aquarius. This is evident in the unexamined manner in which value is mysteriously associated with human life -- and with the sense of fundamental human values. It is this to which Angela Merkel most notably refers in repeatedly justifying her argument that "all are welcome" (Michael Gerson, *Germany's defiant decency in the refugee crisis*, *The Washington Post*, 10 December 2015; Dwight Longenecker, *'All Are Welcome' is a troubling message*, *Catholic Education Resource Center*, 2015; Niamh Hardiman, *A smart or a bold move: how Merkel dealt with the refugee crisis*, *Dublin European Institute*, 23 July 2016; *An Ill Wind: in Europe and at home, Angela Merkel's refugee policy is being blown away*, *The Economist*, January 2016).

**Pricelessness?** Being central to the framing of life-saving, this assumption of value is typically not open to any reasonable discussion -- especially by the heartless. Lives are to be saved at any cost, as recently evidenced by the intense media coverage of the 12 children trapped underground in Thailand. No cost could be spared.

Simultaneously it was of course evident the many situations in which an equivalent number of people (or typically far more) were confronted by crisis and fatality -- but evoking only the most modest response, if any (Binu Mathew, *Kerala Flood is Thousands of Times the Magnitude of Thai Cave Rescue! Yet Still…. CounterCurrents*, 18 August 2018). Considerable effort is of course made to ensure maximum media coverage of those endeavouring heroically to cross the Mediterranean at risk to their lives -- and of those endeavouring to save them.

On the other hand it is also evident, but with far less media coverage, the number of lives "lost" in conflict arenas -- especially those fatalities framed as unfortunate "collateral damage" as a consequence of military action deemed essential (most notably for the protection of Europe against potential fatalities from terrorism). It has been remarked that the number of victims of terrorist strikes in Europe is far exceeded by the number resulting from "collateral damage" in those arenas caused by daily military action there -- in which European countries upholding the highest human values are complicit (*Evaluating the Grossness of Gross Domestic Product: Refugees Per Kiloton (RPK) as a missing indicator?* 2016)..

**Value of human life?** This raises the traditional question of the value of human life as variously reviewed (*On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life*, *Evangelium Vitae*, 25 March 1995; W. Kip Viscusi, *The Value of Life*, Harvard Law School, June 2006; Agamoni Majumder and S. Madheswaran, *Meta-analysis of Value of Statistical Life Estimates*, *Society and Management Review*, 6 January 2017; *Meta-analysis of Value of Statistical Life Estimates*, OECD; *What is the Value of Human Life? Truth Source*; Frank Partnoy, *The Cost of a Human Life, Statistically Speaking*, *The Globalist*, 21 July 2012).

Most extraordinary are the estimates of the "price of life" in the USA -- measured in millions of dollars (*As U.S. Agencies Put More Value on a Life, Businesses Fret*, *The New York Times*, 16 February 2011). These may of course be compared with the price of an underworld contract to terminate a life.

As noted by Kathleen Kingsbury (*The Value of a Human Life: $129,000*, *Time*, 20 May 2008):

> In theory, a year of human life is priceless. In reality, it's worth $50,000. That's the international standard most private and government-run health insurance plans worldwide use to determine whether to cover a new medical procedure.... Stanford economists have demonstrated that the average value of a year of quality human life is actually closer to about $129,000.

Another perspective is offered by J. Mario Molina (*The Value of a Human Life*, *Morning Consult*, 21 July 2017):

> The federal government has an interest in this question, too. Different agencies have set different values on a human life. The Environmental Protection Agency set the value of a life at $9.1 million in 2010. The Food and Drug Administration, on the other hand, came up with a value of $7.9 million and finally, the Transportation Department said it was around $6 million.

Various methodologies for assessing the value of human life are usefully explained for the Global Value Exchange (GVE), a crowd sourced database of "values, outcomes, indicators and stakeholders". As noted for different methodologies (*Valuation of Life*, 9 June 2016):

- Human capital ($1000 - $2,0950,000)
- Contingent valuation ($6,487,000 - $7,460,000)
- Labour market ($7,405,000 - $12,694,000)
- Consumer preference ($577,00 - $13,752,000)
- Cost of death by suicide ($941,00 - $2,725,000)
- Value of a Statistical Life Year -- VSLY ($61,000 - $448,000)
- Quality Adjusted Life Year -- QALY ($30,000 - $328,000)

**Value of a "soul"?** Such preoccupations in the here and now offer curious echoes to the process by which the value of a life is assessed in the hereafter -- according to different traditions, dating from Ancient Egypt. These have their current implications for those preoccupied by the advent of Judgment Day.

In the context of this argument the relative value of life is symbolically framed by one of the principal supporting organizations of Aquarius, namely SOS Méditeranée. The acronym stands for "Save Our Souls" -- with the irony that many of the "souls" may be of Islamic persuasion, who might otherwise be framed as lacking them. The latter consideration offers a reminder that for some the lives of others, those defined as "nobodies", are indeed "worthless". They may well be treated as "cannon fodder" with its strange relation to "canon fodder" (*Capital Punishment of Canon Fodder: death penalty contradictions in the declaration of the Pope*, 2018)

Central to the religious dimension, and to the hypocrisy framed by "just war theory" (and its modern framing of "just sacrifice"), is the controversy relating to the divine injunction: *Thou Shalt Not Kill*. The injunction necessarily excludes responsibility for "allowing people to be killed" -- potentially recognized as the crime of "***withholding aid to those in danger***".

**Cost of saving a life**? Beyond the extreme costs of some forms of medical care, far less evident is what it is appropriate to invest in saving a life -- or a "soul" -- as illustrated by the cave rescue in Thailand. The issue is especially controversial with respect to the disrproportionate costs of medical care for the elderly.

In engaging on their perilous quest, refugees may be obliged to pay a high price to intermediaries. This recalls the symbolism in Greek mythology of the requisite payment to Charon -- the ferryman who carries the souls of the newly deceased across the rivers dividing the world of the living from the world of the dead. The refugees may be obliged to borrow heavily from relatives to whom they then have a debt, which may be payable through enabling the controversial "family reunion" process -- perceived by some as a means of disguising the full extent of migration.

Such arguments also frame the controversial question of whether some lives are more worth saving than others. The issue is clearly central to national identity, as with the massive sanctions currently applied against Turkey by the USA to achieve the repatriation of Pastor Andrew Bunson. The converse is of course evident in the massive cost of terminating the life of Osama bin Laden and the like.

The deeply religious dimension is further highlighted by controversy regarding contraceptives, abortion, assisted dying, and capital punishment.

**Cost of a life?** Whilst lives may indeed have a value, with which a price may be associated, they can also be recognized as having a cost. Of major concern to some is the cost of an extra life on a planet of increasingly constrained resources. How indeed is the cost of an "extra mouth to feed" to be related to assessment of the value of human life?

Potentially more problematic are the costs relating to the use of other scarce resources. These are notably a focus of the methodology of assessment of the ecological footprint of concern to the Global Footprint Network and determination of Earth Overshoot Day.

In a world of ever increasing inequality, some lives will clearly cost more than others -- as articulated with respect to control of resources by 1% of the population -- and proportionately exhorbitant costs would be devoted to saving them.

Missing from the argument framed in this way is the associated value and cost of the lives of the species on which humanity may prove to be dangerously dependent -- especially those in danger of disappearing in the course of the ongoing Holocene Extinction. Ironically, the currently polarized debate with regard to loss of biodiversity could be usefully seen as another instance of that between the "headless

hearts" and the "heartless heads", as clarified by Ehsan Masood (*The Battle for the Soul of Biodiversity: an ideological clash could undermine a crucial assessment of the world's disappearing plant and animal life*, *Nature*, 22 August 2018). The conflict is evident within the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), a younger sibling of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

**Implicit criterion of genetic selection?** It is of course the case that the lives of thousands, if not millions, are in current danger in the countries of Africa from which many seek refuge in Europe. The current investment in saving their lives is relatively modest -- if not extremely modest -- and questionably made.

The valuation of life is however shifted by the perception that refugees are undertaking a life-endangering journey -- culminating in the risks of traversing the Mediterranean. Whereas migrants are readily refused when applying through normal channels, placing their souls at risk is seen as changing the rules of the game. Their lives thereby become "worth saving". Rules can be set aside.

Cynically this could be understood as a new criterion of migrant selection -- a genetic selection process based on risk-taking capacity in response to the need for enhancing the European labour force. It is somewhat reminiscent of the much-deprecated eugenic process of the past -- for those with Aryan racial characteristics. That a percentage should be sacrificed by drowning during the process has been curiously transformed into a significant guarantee that their companions are worthy of refugee status.

## Reframing the "gold standard" evaluation of human life

**Price of future life -- or life in the future?** Missing from the various assessments of the value or price of life is any concern whatsoever with **the present-day value of the life of those of future generations**. This is curious in that through the preoccupation of economists and speculators with "futures", prices of an extensive range of commodities are determined over years to come -- and potentially decades. In a so-called futures exchange, contracts can thus be traded to buy specific quantities of a commodity or financial instrument at a specified price with delivery set at a specified time in the future.

Whether life is to be recognized as a commodity or not, that framework raises the fundamental question of the value of human life at some time in the future -- in decades to come (if not generations). **The current focus on the economic costs of refugees and migrants is narrowly focused on the present day, carefully avoiding future implications to an extraordinary degree**, as separately discussed (*Anticipating Future Migration into Europe (2018-2050): beyond the irresponsibility of current political and humanitarian short-termism*, 2017; Jennifer Rankin *How prepared is the EU for a future surge in migrant arrivals? The Guardian*, 14 August 2018). Sadly it could be appropriate to determine whether thr slave trade was witness to futures contracts -- for future delivery of a supply of slaves.

Ironically greater attention, however deprecated, is devoted to the value of life in the hereafter. The irony is all the greater in that *jihadists* -- those deprecated as incomprehensible suicide bombers -- are specifically inspired by the manner in which their lives will be valued in the hereafter. As with those acclaimed as heroes and martyrs in other contexts, they attach a particular existential value to their lives and are prepared to engage in action framed as "paying with their lives". Framed by "just war theory", those acclaimed as heroes in"legitimate" warfare may of course cause as many fatalities to others as do *jihadists*. Presumably these contrasts were also characteristic of the crusades. This could be relevant to the understanding of any evaluation of the European workforce needs in the years to come.

**Mysterious relation to gold?** The interplay of "life" and "gold" is evident in the curious phrase "life is worth its weight in gold" -- curious in that life is without weight, other than metaphorically and through wordplay with respect to the cost of waiting in life (*Clues to "waiting" from "weighting"?* 2018). This interplay has continued to have a fundamental role in society through centuries past.

The symbolism associated with life is all the more mysterious in that it is intimately related to gold as perhaps the most esteemed tangible symbol of value. Lives may be lived in the quest for gold and completely inspired by it (or by some equivalent) and with the possibiity of displaying it prominently as an indication of worth. Gold remains a preoccupation today, being intimately associated with a sense of wealth and as a symbol of it.

Gold has been intimately associated with the status of a sovereign -- extending to representation of sovereign authority in gold coin. The quest for gold has been fundamental to the conquest and colonial exploitation of distant lands -- from which there is now challenging influx of migrants to the former colonial powers. Curiously, however, very little can be usefully done with it -- in radical contrast to the efforts made to acquire it.

Confusion centres on the heart as a nexus of symbolism through images such as "heart of gold", itself conflated with "sacred heart" (as central to Catholic iconography). The latter is extended to include the symbolism of blood and its circulation as ensured by the heart (as with the importance accorded to the Blood of Christ). Such imagery has been valued in many cultures in relation to sacrifice (perhaps most notably by the Aztecs). Clearly a powerful sense of self-sacrifice is evoked by the imagery of refugees placing themselves at risk on the high seas -- even suggesting a comparison of getting to Europe with climbing the steps of an Aztec sacrificial temple.

The symbolism may be extended to the mystical quest for a legendary elixir to ensure the preservation of life -- epitomized both by the quest for the Holy Grail and the more mundane use of "liquid gold" as variously proposed in some alternative therapies. Aspects of the quest are evident in the purported efforts of alchemists to transform base metals into gold. This is now curiously echoed by the mind-uploading ambition of transhumanists. It would be fair to argue that refugees readily frame Europe as a form of elixir through which their lives can be transmuted and preserved.

The imagery is subtly combined with the preoccupation of economics with the circulation of currency (of which gold has been the basis) as vital to the economic life of a society -- enabled by its "economic heart". The focus on the essential circulation of blood in relation to life is evident in the symbolism explored by Carl Jung and Richard Wilhelm with respect to a Chinese classic, *The Secret of the*

*Golden Flower* (*Tai Yi Jin Hua Zong Zhi*). and the associated inner alchemical practice of *Neidan*, as discussed separately (*Circulation of the Light: essential metaphor of global sustainability?* 2010).

**Value of a human value?** Whilst there is clearly intense interest in the "value of human life" and separately in "human values", it is somewhat of a mystery that no effort is made to place to explore the "value of human values". This is necessarily mysterious and essentally subjective. Efforts to evaluate "quality of life" focus on objective indicators, not on their subjective implications -- more readily a preoccupation of indicators of happiness (Arianna Huffington, *Beyond Economic Indicators: A True Happiness Index*, 30 November 2016).

Following from the much-quoted assertion of Socrates -- *an unexamined life is not worth living* -- it is clear that another perspective on the value of life is evoked. Individuals are clearly free in principle to value their lives otherwise -- whether or not they place a high or low value on it relative to the appreciation of others. This offers the implication that the freedom to value one's life according to one's lights is potentially of greater value than the value that might be otherwise attached to that life. Appropriately, the perspective of Socrates can be contested (Mark Maller, *The Unexamined Life Is Worth Living: A Socratic Perspective*, *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations*, 12, 2013).

**Determining the "worth" or "worthlessness" of life**: How are people able to assess whether a life is worth living? The question is obviously central to the dilemma of those who are suffering in some way -- and especially those faced with chronic or terminal illness.

At the time of writing, a curious acknowledgement by the medical profession in the USA has been noted. People are now dying earlier as a consequence of "shit-life syndrome" -- an explanation seen as relevant to a similar trend in the UK (Will Hutton, *The bad news is we're dying early in Britain - and it's all down to 'shit-life syndrome'*, *The Guardian*, 19 August 2018). The term is of course especially pertinent to the condition of those seeking to migrate across the Mediterranean. This is consistent with the highly controversial comment of Donald Trump regarding "shit-hole countries" (*Trump derides protections for immigrants from 'shithole' countries*, *The Washington Post*, 12 January 2018). Recognition of "shit-life syndrome" in the USA, then justifies more detailed analysis (*Evidence for the USA as a "shithole country"*, 2018) with even more general implications (*Earth as a Shithole Planet -- from a Universal Perspective?* 2018).

The argument above indicates that many have an objective interest in determing -- for themselves -- the value of life of others . More intriguing is the right arrogated by some authorities to determine the worth of a life -- to those living it. When does the sense of living a "shit-hole life" justify suicide, for example -- or the desire for "assisted dying"? What right do religions have to ensure legal sanctions against those who seek "a way out" -- especially when their humanitariant intervention in relieving any suffering in tanbible terms is modest, if not totally absent?

To what extent is it a right for individual to determine the "worth" or their own lives, especially when authorities are unable relieve their suffering -- or any experience of a "shit-hole" condition? The question is particularrly relevant when authorities readily frame some lives to be "worthless" -- allowing them to terminate them directly by military action or by subterfuge through structural violence.

**Insights from the "gold standard"?** An absolutely equal value of human life could be seen as implicitly defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) -- irrespective of flagrant breach of its provisions. Could this be usefully compared with the gold standard, which was so fundamental to the definition of monetary value at the beginning of the 20th century?

The gold standard is especially relevant to this argument because of the progressive drift away from it over the period prior to the UNDHR coming into force. It no longer has the same financial function that it had, despite the value that continues to be attached to gold as a form of "reserve currency". It could however be argued that the massive slaughter in the course of the 20th century firmly established the relative worthlessness of human life in practice for many authorities -- and following various degrees of complicity in the slave trade of earlier centuries.

As a tangible token of universal value, gold offers insights through the manner in which its value is now "fixed" on "metal exchanges" -- more specifically the London Bullion Market (in contrast with the London Metal Exchange where "base metals" are traded). The complex "flexibility" through which the value of gold is determined and traded, notably in terms of forward contracts, known as gold futures contracts, could be said to offer a metaphor of sufficient richness to clarify confusion regarding the manner in which the value of human life is objectively determined in this period -- and for the future.

The metaphor is all the more useful in that the regulatory constraints on the manner in which an individual can engage in gold trading bear comparison with the constraints on an individual in determing personal worth and the value of life. Authorised intermediaries are typically required. As with any commodity market, the metal exchange and bullion market enable a process of subjective speculation by those able to do so. Curiously, despite provision of the freedoms of the UNDHR, speculation on the value of life is inhibited -- or rather individuals are severely constrained in their ability to act on their subjective sense of worth.

There is some irony with respect to this metaphor in that the operations of a "metal exchange" enable base metals to be converted into gold as required. The irony lies in the degree to which this recalls the deprecated ambition of alchemists to transmute "base metals" into "gold" -- metaphorically understood as a means of transmuting the value of life in some way. Curiously it could be said that individuals are not empowered -- permitted -- to have their own personal "metal exchange" within which they can transmute the value of life as they may in the quest for greater wealth and fulfillment however vain and foolish.

The controversial complex of unresolved associations with respect to these issues is perhaps best embodied in the roles and interests of Isaac Newton. As both an icon of science and a respected theologian, he was also Master of the Royal Mint -- argubaly a person endowed with both "head" and "heart". Far more controversial was his complementary interest in alchemy, detracting from his iconic status as a President of the Royal Society -- a group of "heartless heads" in archetypal terms. It is only recently that the Newton Project has been able to engage in rendering accessible the body of his work (previously kept under seal by the Royal Society).

## Migration crisis as a temporal "trolley problem" for Europe

As now experienced by European policy makers, the migration crisis merits reflection in the light of the classic "trolley problem" -- a much-studied thought experiment in ethics and moral philosophy. It is a specific experiment among several that highlights the difference between deontological and consequentialist ethical systems. The central question that these dilemmas bring to light is on whether or not it is right to actively inhibit the utility of an individual if doing so produces a greater utility for other individuals.

In relation to the migration crisis, the trolley problem could be framed in terms of the choice between saving relatively few in the present (condemning many to death in the future) or acting to save the many in the future (by constraining the response to the relatively few in the present). **This emphasizes the temporal dimension in contrast with other articulations of the problem** -- those of the future being effectively neglected as "over the temporal horizon", as with other forms of strategic short-termism (Roger L. Martin, *Yes, Short-Termism Really Is a Problem*, *Harvard Business Review*, 9 October 2015).

The trolley problem helps to focus any effort at root cause analysis of the migration/refugee crisis when its most disruptive effects may be experienced in the future rather in the present. Focusing on present adaptation by tinkering with policy "fixes" (as is currently the case), carefully avoids the need to attend to the dimensions of the crisis in the future, an approach which is similarly evident in the response to climate change, food/water shortages, and the like (*Vigorous Application of Derivative Thinking to Derivative Problems: transcending bewailing, hand-wringing and emotional blackmail*, 2013).

Pressure from the Catholic Church frames the focus on saving the relatively few in the present, gambling on the possibility that the fate of those in the future may be more appropriately addressed at that time -- if any thought is accorded to their fate. This is in sympathy with political short-termism and achieving acclaim for success within a current political mandate.

Hope is given through promises to those faced with death in the present; the fate of those in the future is in turn placed on hope, however unrealisitic -- and even the possibility of divine intervention in some form (possibly to be compared with winning a global lottery). The approach could be understood in terms of an instance of immediate gratification -- for both the victims and authorities. This is consistent with current marketing philosophy and strategic short-termism (Neil Patel, *The Psychology of Instant Gratification -- and how it will revolutionize your marketing approach*, *Entrepreneur*, 24 June 2014).

The approach contrasts with understandings of deferred gratification, namely the process of resisting the temptation of an immediate reward in preference for a later reward. Such delayed gratification is otherwise fundamental to Church teachings regarding the relative value of later heavenly reward. A growing body of literature has linked the ability to delay gratification to a host of other positive outcomes, including academic success, physical health, psychological health, and social competence. In contrast, as with politicians, **the Church would appear to be fundamentally indifferent to future suffering**. This itself relates curiously to the indifference to the suffering of those faced with terminal illnesses, or the consequences of giving birth to children that cannot be effectively nourished. The economic implications of such choices are now explored in terms of time preference.

Irrespective of the time preference of the Catholic Church, **far more problematic is the radical opposition to any debate on time preferences and risk analysis**, as they may affect the fate of billions in the future. The position of the Church is non-negotiable and the possibility of dialogue with regard to that position is as "unacceptable" as the death penalty is now upheld to be. The posture frames any alternative remedial response as being the responsibility of wider society -- irrespective of how evidently it has proven unable to cope. The suffering of millions is therefore used as a form of blackmail -- seeking conformation to the worldview of the Church and those seeking full-spectrum dominance of moral discourse.

## Refugee crisis: exemplar of a "wicked problem" of unforeseen scale and impact

The policy sciences recognize the existence of a "wicked problem", namely a complex problem which is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, or changing requirements that are often difficult to recogniz -- especially when efforts to solve one aspect of it may reveal or create another. Use of "wicked" has come to denote resistance to resolution, rather than evil -- although some would cultivate that focus as a complement to expectation of divine intervention (*Existence of evil as authoritatively claimed to be an overriding strategic concern*, 2016).

**Precursor?** The refugee/migration crisis can be usefully recognized as a **precursor of other wicked problems**, especially those associated with climate change and constrained access to resources. In particular it can be characterized by:

- ***unforeseen scale***, especially since the preoccupation with its present impact discourages attention on its possible future scale. This is evident from any estimates of the number of people who may seek to migrate in the future in the light of the buregoning populations in countries which are already in a state of crisis -- with little evidence of being able to surmount it. With respect to the unforeseen, of relevance are the arguments of Nassim Nicholas Taleb (*The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, 2007)

- ***principled intractable righteousnes***s exhibited in discussion of any dimensions of the issue. Those arguing for any one perspective typically make vigorous claims to be unquestionably "right", deprecating or ignoring alternative perspectives. This can be understood as a form of the TINA syndrome -- There Is No Alternative -- and is especially typical of elites from any part of the ideological spectrum. What needs to be done is then unquestionable, and the means of doing so can be clearly and simply articulated (*Considering All the Strategic Options -- whilst ignoring alternatives and disclaiming cognitive protectionism*, 2009; *The Consensus Delusion*, 2011). Any who disagree need to be constrained or eliminated (*Eradication as the Strategic Final Solution of the 21st Century?* 2014).

- ***consequential ignorance*** of the perspective of constituencies whose voices cannot be heard, or who variously choose not to hear. This has proven to be most strikingly evident in the surprise election of Donald Trump, as well as the emergence of populist movements in other countries -- all with unforeseen impacts on processes of governance (*Radical Disaffection Engendered by Elitist Groupthink?* 2016; Nicholas Rescher, *Ignorance: on the wider implications of deficient knowledge*, 2009)

- ***ungovernability of society***, despite assumptions to the contrary, as is already widely demonstrable -- with the exception of short-term, remedial tinkering. The structures and processes of governance are increasingly incapable of coping with "wicked problems" and corruption (*Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy?* 2011). A mockery is increasingly made of previous assumptions regarding the rule of law enabled by legislation and multilateral treaties (*New World Order of Walk-away Wheeling and Dealing: creating strategic dependency and vulnerability through confidence tricks*, 2018).

- ***planned disenablement of technology***, as is most evident in the manner in which working software is rendered inoperable by imposition of updates claiming to offer valuable new features (which may well be of very limited use). Such changes have the undeclared advantage of marginalizing applications by competitors. Beyond planned obsolescence of hardware, purportedly beneficial new standards (notably for purposes of security), ensure progressive erosion of the capacity of the world's computer users, aside from difficulties of accessing information based on earlier standards.

- ***negative incapability*** in the sense of being cognitively locked into positive strategic perspectives allowing for no possible doubt or self-questioning. Negative capability has been famously framed by the poet John Keats as the ability to engage with uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, "without any irritable reaching after fact and reason", thereby remaining content with half-knowledge (*Living with Incomprehension and Uncertainty*, 2012; *Global implications of "betwixt and between" and liminality*, 2011).

**"Wicked debate"?** Ironically the above-mentioned argument made by Paul Collier before the Oxford Union, regarding the "strident" and "polarized" nature of debate about the refugee crisis, was only too evident in that debate itself (*Head to Head*, *Al Jazeera*, 7 August 2015; 18 August 2018).

It is characteristic of "wicked problems" that no provision is made for styles of debate more appropriate to the divisive dynamics deriving from prevailing conventions of debate. Such debate is not collectively self-reflexive and sees no need to be, as could be otherwise argued (*Encycling Problematic Wickedness for Potential Humanity*, 2014). Nor is it otherwise enabled by technology capable of configuring conflicting perspectives (*Visualization Enabling Integrative Conference Comprehension: global articulation of future-oriented 3D technology*, 2018).

**Simulation?** Given both the confusion of claims and counter-claims regarding refugees/migration, there is a case for making far greater use of simulation to explore:

- different scenarios regarding possible numbers and their economic impact, whether as desired for replacement labour or as a challenge to adaptation of social security facilities and accommodation
- different scenarios regarding impact on local communities, especially as experienced by them
- different scenarios regarding evolution of the influx and possible changes in policy as the impacts become evident
- different challenges to administration in assessing, selecting and distributing refugees as numbers increase
- different scenarios with regard to pressures of statistical services to massage refugee categories in support of particular political agendas
- different challenges of regulatory oversight given the numbers which may need to be handled equitably
- possibilities of variously configuring claims and counter-claims in support of debate
- means of taking account of issues of ungovernability and relative ignorance of those engaged in debate, as well as possibilities of subterfuge and the remarkable tendencies to corruption -- even at the highest level

Useful clarification could be provided by exploring perceptions of credibility according to the extent to which supporters of refugee distribution to European communities themselves provided such facilities. An example is provided by the over 500 signatories appended to the *SOS Méditerranée declaration on the departure of Aquarius* (2 August 2018).

## Re-cognizing the "inner game" of humanitarian agencies: "astrological systematics"?

In framing their humanitarian intervention under the banner of Aquarius, the image management for the media merits recognition as characteristic of a form of humanitarian memetic warfare against unconsulted peoples. This can be seen as deliberately "pulling on their heart strings" through their susceptibility to being readily "seduced" by the imagery deployed. This applies as much to the "horrors" of the conflict arenas as to the promoted "dream" of Europe as a destination.

Construed as flying a singular symbolic flag to ensure full-spectrum dominance of moral discourse, "Aquarius" then justifies a systemic response in terms of the exploited symbol system -- irrespective of how it may be deprecated in other contexts. The singularity of the symbolic banner appropriately recalls the insight of policy scientist Geoffrey Vickers: ***A trap is a function of the nature of the trapped*** (*Freedom in a Rocking Boat: changing values in an unstable society*, 1972).

An "Aquarian" perspective can then be understood as a particular systemic trap which calls for a requisite variety of compensatory functions to counterbalance its limitations. The traditional characteristics of the other signs of the 12-fold pattern of the zodiac can therefore be used as mnemonic indicators of the necessary alternative perspectives. The issue is the other players in the memetic wargame which Aquarius has engendered -- and the strategies they may typically choose to employ. (Memetic wargaming has already

been anticipated in online gaming)

The argument for this approach does not derive from any astrological preoccupation, but rather from the manner in which patterns of personality and functional types may be distinguished to be of relevance to the viability of any system (*Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases*, 1993). It is of less consequence whether 6, 7, 8, 9, or 12 types are distinguished, as in the following:

- Edward de Bono: *Six Thinking Hats: an essential approach to business management* (1985): *Six Frames For Thinking About Information* (2008)
- Magoroh Maruyama: *Mindscapes, social patterns and future development of scientific theory types* (1980)
- Howard Gardner: *Frames of Mind: the theory of multiple intelligences* (1984)
- Will McWhinney: *Paths of Change: strategic choices for organizations and society.* (1991)
- Geert Hofstede: *Culture's Consequences: international diffrences in work-related values* (1984)
- W. T. Jones: *The Romantic Syndrome: toward a new method in cultural anthropology and the history of ideas* (1961)
- A. G. E. Blake: *The Intelligent Enneagram* (1996)
- Meredith Belbin: *Team Role Inventories* (1981)
- Katharine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers: *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*

Of greater relevance is the degree of variety which each endeavours to distinguish -- however clustered -- and the complementarity this is held to imply, as with pantheons of deities of yore. In this sense **the astrological pattern is merely one example in terms of which the particular function of "Aquarius" can be recognized** -- together with its constraints as "a trap". An insightful exploration of the astrological pattern in terms of learning cycles has however been made by Arthur M. Young (*Geometry of Meaning*, 1976), as discussed with respect to strategy (*Typology of 12 complementary strategies essential to sustainable development*, 1998).

In that spirit, the constrained role of "Aquarius" may therefore be tentatively highlighted in relation to the other signs as follows, each associated below with one of the 12 traditional Labours of Hercules. Such an association serves to further emphasize the play on symbolism by which future policy may be influenced. Recent use of the traditional modality of fables to reframe strategic dilemmas is variously evident (Dick McCann, *Aesop's Management Fables,* 1997; Russell Ackoff, *Ackoff's Fables: irreverent reflections on business and bureaucracy*, 1991; Jonathan H. Klein, *Ackoff's Fables revisited: stories to inform operational research practice*, *Omega*, 37, 2009, 2).

| **Juxtaposition of constructive and destructive characteristics** | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **"Constructive" characteristics** | **"Destructive" characteristics** |
| **Aquarius** | • Cultivation of relationships<br>• Humanitarian initiatives<br>• Wide-ranging interests<br>• Creativivity and innovation<br>• Independence<br>• Loyalty and trustworthiness | • Unpredictability and inconsistency.<br>• Detached and aloof<br>• Stubbornness<br>• Uncompromising extremism |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting: Gemini, Libra* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining: Taurus, Leo, Scorpio* |
| Fable: *Clean the Augean stables* | | |
| **Pisces** | • Imaginative<br>• Kind and compassionate<br>• Intuitive and sensitive<br>• Selflessness | • Escapism<br>• Idealism<br>• Over-sensitivity<br>• Pessimism.<br>• Laziness |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting: Cancer, Scorpio* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining: Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius,* |
| Fable: *Capture the red cattle of Geryon* | | |
| **Aries** | • Adventurous<br>• Courageous<br>• Versatility<br>• Energetic<br>• Positive and passionate | • Arrogant.<br>• Stubborn<br>• Impulsive and undisciplined<br>• Confrontational |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting: Leo, Sagittarius* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining: Cancer, Libra, Capricorn* |
| Fable: *Capture of Man-easting Mares* | | |
| **Taurus** | • Generous<br>• Dependable and down to earth<br>• Patient and persistent<br>• Independent | • Stubborn<br>• Self-indulgent and lazy.<br>• Materialistic<br>• Possessive |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting: Virgo, Capricorn* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining: Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius* |
| Fable: *Capture of the Cretan Bull* | | |
| **Gemini** | • Adjustable, flexible and versatile<br>• Enthusiastic<br>• Skilled communication.<br>• Humorous<br>• Clever | • Inconsistent<br>• Superficial<br>• Indecisive<br>• Anxious |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting: Libra, Aquarius* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining: Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces* |
| Fable: *Steal the apples of the Hesperides* | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Cancer** | • Creative<br>• Spontaneous and intuitive<br>• Faithful and selfless<br>• Protective<br>• Emotional | • Moody<br>• Pessimistic<br>• Dependent<br>• Overemotional<br>• Suspicious |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting:* *Scorpio, Pisces* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining:* *Aries, Libra, Capricorn* |
| Fable: *Capture the Ceryneian Hind* | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Leo** | • Kind and helpful<br>• Energetic<br>• Optimistic<br>• Straightforward and honest<br>• Loyal | • Headstrong<br>• Egoistic<br>• Possessive<br>• Dominating<br>• Impatient<br>• Arrogant |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting:* *Aries, Sagittarius* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining:* *Taurus, Scorpio, Aquarius* |
| Fable: *Slay the Nemean lion* | | |
| **Virgo** | • Watchful<br>• Intelligent<br>• Practical<br>• Analytical<br>• Reliable and trustworthy<br>• Modest perfectionists. | • Overcritical and fussy<br>• Fastidious<br>• Harsh<br>• Conservative<br>• Judgemental |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting:* *Taurus, Capricorn* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining:* *Gemini, Sagittarius, Pisces* |
| Fable: *Obtain the girdle of Hippolyta* | | |
| **Libra** | • Tactful and diplomatic<br>• Charming and romantic<br>• Just | • Superficial<br>• Detached<br>• Unreliable and indecisive<br>• Lazy |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting:* *Gemini, Aquarius* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining:* *Aries, Cancer, Capricorn* |
| Fable: *Capture the Erymanthian Boar* | | |
| **Scorpio** | • Focused<br>• Courageous<br>• Balanced<br>• Faithful<br>• Ambitious<br>• Intuitive | • Jealous and possessive.<br>• Secretive<br>• Resentful<br>• Manipulative an domineering |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting:* *Cancer, Pisces* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining:* *Taurus, Leo, Aquarius* |
| Fable: *Slay the nine-headed Lernaean Hydra* | | |
| **Sagittarius** | • Straightforward<br>• Intellectual<br>• Philosophical<br>• Generous. | • Careless<br>• Tactless<br>• Impatient<br>• Inconsistent<br>• Over-confident |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting:* *Aries, Leo* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining:* *Gemini, Virgo, Pisces* |
| Fable: *Slay the Stymphalian birds* | | |
| **Capricorn** | • Practical<br>• Ambitious<br>• Mature and sensible.<br>• Disciplined<br>• Patient<br>• Cautious | • Pessimistic<br>• Stubborn<br>• Shy |
| Systemic feedback | *Supportive/Complementary/Aiding/Abetting:* *Taurus, Virgo* | *Opposition/Aggravation/Undermining:* *Aries, Cancer, Libra* |
| Fable: *Capture and bring back Cerberus* | | |

Within that framework, of interest is the assessment of the capacity of Aquarius for emotional blackmail, as presented by Ruby Miranda (*Zodiac Signs That Are Scarily Good At Emotional Blackmail (So Watch Out)*, *Your Tango*):

> One wouldn't automatically assume Aquarius has much manipulative power to them, but shocker time: Aquarians make the most manipulative and cruel emotional sadists on earth. The thing is, if you're in the way of them getting what they want, even if it's YOU that they want, they'll hurt you. They'll cut you up with their emotional knives and you'll bleed your heart out, wondering how anyone could be THAT conscience-free.

## Time for provocative mnemonic aids to systemic connectivity?

This argument, and the above exercise in "astrological systematics", derived from recognition of unexamined preferences for 12-fold

strategic articulations (*Checklist of 12-fold Principles, Plans, Symbols and Concepts: web resources*, 2011). Briefly it can be asserted that **any such pattern is typically developed without any effort to determine the systemic relations between the 12 elements so distinguished**. The astrological system, however deprecated, is an exception to this.

The surprising absence of insight seemingly dates back to the failure to distinguish the relations between the 12 deities in the pantheons of Greece and Rome -- other than through well-known fables. Curiously this is as true of the 12 Apostles of Christianity, as of their analogues in other faiths. The omission is evident in the case of the UN's set of Millennium Development Goals and its revision as the Sustainable Development Goals. They are "systemically handicapped".

There is therefore a case for discovering mnemonic aids to systemic comprehension, as previously argued (*In Quest of Mnemonic Catalysts -- for comprehension of complex psychosocial dynamics*, 2007). Aside from other exercises to that end, using computer technology and virtual reality, there is a provocative challenge to mapping any 12-fold set within which the Aquarius function may deemed to be systemically embedded.

The argument has been developed further in an annex (*Time for provocative mnemonic aids to systemic connectivity? Possibilities of reconciling the "headless hearts" to the "heartless heads"*, 2018).

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